The Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism

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be expected to strike frequently to dis-
rupt society, the strikes will be difficult
to identify and stop, and a progressively
more integrated world will continue to
foster easier access and more effective
networks.

In chapters 4 through 7, Ullman deals
with a wide range of strategy options
for dealing with the threat. His focus is
on the causes of the Palestinian-Israeli
conflict; autocratic rule in Saudi Ara-
bia, Iran, Syria, and Egypt; the Indian-
Pakistani conflict over Kashmir; and the
proliferation of weapons of mass
destruction.

In the final chapter (chapter 8), Ullman
does an excellent job of pulling his
thoughts together and summarizing el-
ments of a countervailing strategy
that are addressed individually in the
earlier parts of the book. They include
international considerations such as a
revised alliance system as well as do-
meric recommendations involving
Congress, the Department of Defense,
the intelligence community, and na-
tional security education. Overall the
chapter presents a comprehensive and
well thought out approach for tackling
the threat of Islamic extremism. As
such, it overcomes a minor distraction
of earlier chapters, where the author
occasionally digresses from his central
focus to provide possibly unnecessary
background information.

Overall, I recommend the book to any
reader concerned with Islamic extrem-
ism. Much has been written about the
subject, but Ullman is to be com-
mended for his contribution to our un-
derstanding of the challenge and for his
wide-ranging and insightful suggestions
for a countervailing strategy.

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Ferguson, Charles D., William C. Potter, et al. The
Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism. Monterey, Calif.:
378pp. $19.95

Only readers well prepared for a sober-
ing analysis of the likelihood of the use
of nuclear materials by terrorists and its
consequences should read this book.
The Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism
stands alone as a realistic and scientific
treatment of a dire threat. It is well re-
searched, credible, and easily understood
despite delving into nuclear physics.
The authors, all with impeccable cre-
dentials, have effectively framed their
discussions around four situations that
chillingly illustrate how nuclear materi-
als may find their way into a devastat-
ing weapon of mass destruction.

Each of the “four faces” is a distinct sce-
nario of nuclear terrorism and a fright-
ening apparition of what our nation
confronts. The first example is theft and
detonation of an intact nuclear weapon,
without question the most worrisome,
followed secondly by theft or purchase
of fissile material leading to the fabrica-
tion and detonation of a crude nuclear
weapon or, as the authors say, an “im-
provised nuclear device.” The third ex-
ample is an attack on, or sabotage of,
nuclear installations, causing the release
of large amounts of radioactivity. The
final manifestation is terrorist dispersal
of highly radioactive material by con-
ventional explosives, commonly referred
to as a “dirty bomb” or, in the authors’
words, a “radiological dispersion de-
vice.” For each of these calamitous cir-
cumstances, the authors provide a
cacophony of story lines, any one of
which would make a riveting movie.
The writers cleverly create an analytic framework to examine the four “faces” of nuclear terrorism. This probing methodology includes looking at a causative chain of events leading to the acquisition and detonation of a mass-casualty weapon incorporating nuclear material; terrorist motivations and capabilities to achieve nuclear potential; transfer of radiological materials by force, intimidation, collusion, insider assistance, or as a gift by rogue states; defeating safeguards on the physical protection of fissile material or safeguards against unauthorized detonation of a nuclear device; undetected transportation of a device to the target; and lastly, consequence management of an undeterred terrorist nuclear attack.

Although the authors distinguish between the four scenarios, their analysis of underlying factors is often unnecessarily repetitive. Indeed, conclusions are lifted verbatim from previous chapters—understandably, since patterns of illegal activity often mirror each other, regardless of criminal goal. This frequent redundancy undermines the argument that there are four distinct paradigms relating to nuclear terrorism. Nevertheless, skillful incorporation of case studies helps to discriminate the authors’ definitions.

The book does a less effective job of assessing the security environment. Chapter 1 states, “Risk can be defined as the probability of an event multiplied by its consequences . . . the greater the probability [emphasis added] or the greater the consequences, the higher the overall risk.” A more complete analysis of risk, however, should consider factors of vulnerability and threat with more specificity. Probability, as the authors use the word, may implicitly consider threat, foreseeability, and vulnerability, but alone is inadequate to capture the challenge of assessing risk. The book asserts that all four scenarios “pose potentially grave and imminent dangers” and America “must work to address all of them.” Risk analysis is designed to prioritize resources and energy. Unfortunately, however, the book’s conclusions do not offer much in the way of clear focus when all four faces are equally serious. In case the reader is not convinced of a nuclear terrorist threat, the authors declare, “Given the significant quantities of radioactive material currently outside regulatory control around the world, the unambiguous evidence of terrorist interest in using these materials to cause harm, and the ease of carrying out a radiological attack, we believe that such an attack is all but inevitable.” So much for risk assessment.

In contrast, a particularly superb treatment of the most frightening development—that of a terrorist group acquiring an intact nuclear weapon—is found in chapter 3. This authoritative discussion of deteriorating nuclear security in Russia is at the same time candid and grave. The authors offer an intriguing juxtaposition between the ominous threat of huge Cold War intercontinental ballistic missiles and today’s menace of small, portable nuclear weapons. Thoughtful readers will not miss the implications that “the good old days” of the Soviet menace made risk assessment less risky.

Despite some drawbacks, this book effectively leads confused scientific neophytes toward clarity in dealing with the threat of nuclear terrorism. It describes solutions in ways that allow homeland security professionals to
begin crafting prescriptive implementation plans. However, as with many of the challenges to defeat terrorism, convincing the public to expend limited resources is the first hurdle. The Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism is a terrific attempt to do just that.

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Martin L. Cook's most recent offering covers a wide variety of subjects, including a framework for just wars, military officers' professional qualities, humanitarian interventions, and a historical analysis of strategic bombing.

Cook previously taught for sixteen years in the Department of Religious Studies, Santa Clara University, and then as professor of ethics for five years at the U.S. Army War College. Since July 2003, he has served as the deputy department head of the Philosophy Department at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Cook has written numerous scholarly articles and two books: Saving the Earth: A History of a Middle-Class Millenarian Movement with Steven Gelber, and The Open Circle: Confessional Method in Theology.

The first chapter describes eight criteria that civilian policy makers can use to determine whether it is morally justified to go to war. The main tenets of just war doctrine represent a culmination of accepted constraints going back to the time of St. Augustine (AD 354–430). Cook labels them as “just cause, legitimate authority, public declaration, just intent, proportionality, last resort, reasonable hope of success, and end of peace.” A war can earn the title of just war only when it meets these constraints when it is initiated (jus ad bellum) and when it is justly conducted (jus in bello). The responsibility for jus in bello falls primarily upon the military leadership. The military recommends “the rules of engagement, choice of weapons and targets, treatment of civilian populations and prisoners of war, and so forth.” The just-war framework will not produce “moral certainty,” but it will provide civilian and military leadership a framework to evaluate the decision to go to war, as well as a guide for conducting the war.

Cook also describes some professional qualities required of military officers. They must be subordinate to civilian leadership, have integrity, and provide professional military advice based on professional knowledge. He writes, “The military has a significant resistance to embracing operation-other-than-war missions in general.” Cook maintains that the military must be able to see clearly the changing environment and develop the intellectual agility to adapt to it. Some of the chapters, written just after Kosovo and before 9/11, argue that humanitarian operations are the new strategic environment. (Assuming the next war will be similar to the last one is a common trap.) Much of the book focuses on the challenges of humanitarian intervention. Cook writes that “the decision to initiate hostilities over Kosovo was unjustified and unwise.” He further states: “Humanitarian causes and human rights were cited to ‘trump’ Serbian sovereignty. The action itself was not authorized by any resolution of the UN Security Council.” He seems to believe there is not an effective